UNITED
NATIONS

EP

Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/HLC/3/INF/1
13 October 1998

ENGLISH ONLY

HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS
Third meeting
Buenos Aires, 10 November 1998
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

REFORM OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements to the Secretary-General

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements to the Secretary-General, dated 15 June 1998, together with the letter dated 18 June 1998, from the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report.

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Annex

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT

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Date: 18 June 1998

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to inform you of the successful completion of the work of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements, that you had asked me to chair, pursuant to your Reform proposals on "Renewing the United Nations".

At the outset, allow me to express my personal appreciation at the confidence and trust that you have demonstrated in me by appointing me as the Chairman of the Task Force to undertake these important further steps in the reform of the United Nations.

The Task Force completed its work as scheduled on the 15 June 1998 in Geneva at its fourth meeting. As you will appreciate, given its large and diverse membership as well as the complexity of issues being addressed, numerous options and issues were considered. The final report is the outcome therefore of a wide ranging and in-depth discussion that took as its point of departure a commonly held conviction that the institutional fragmentation and lack of policy coherence over the last few years had resulted in a loss of effectiveness of the work of the United Nations in the area of environment and human settlements. A range of measures were considered at various levels that could contribute to the revitalisation and coherence of the work of the United Nations in these areas of activity.

The Report of the Task Force contains a series of recommendations at the inter-agency, intergovernmental and programme levels that are designed to enhance coordinated action by the United Nations and begin the process of improving overall policy coherence and the functioning of intergovernmental policy mechanisms. The recommendations include the establishment of an Environment Management Group as the first embodiment of the "issue management" approach contained in your reform proposals, as well as the institution of annual meetings of the Governing Council of UNEP at the ministerial level. It also includes a recommendation that the membership of the Governing Council of UNEP be made universal.

Mr. Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General
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I am particularly pleased that our shared objective of strengthening and elevating the UN presence in Nairobi has been strongly recognised by the Task Force. The recommendations in this regard include those relating to unifying the administration of UNEP and Habitat and developing common programmatic and institutional linkages. The Task Force also recommended that the UN compound be transformed into a fully active UN headquarters, that UNON be provided sufficient resources from the UN regular budget and that UNEP, UNON and Habitat continue in the future to be directed by one person.

A number of innovative and forward looking recommendations with respect to major groups and civil society are also contained in the report, and the Task Force has also made interesting proposals on a future role of the Trusteeship Council. With respect to the latter, it has recommended that a two day "environment forum" be held immediately before the next session of the UNEP Governing Council, and that this forum, as well as the Council, provide an input to the Millennium Assembly and Forum on forward looking proposals on the global environment, including the possible future role of the Trusteeship Council.

Overall, I believe that the Report of the Task Force should be seen as the commencement of a longer term approach to equip the United Nations to concretely address the pervasive environment and sustainable development problems of the present and the future. In this regard, the report provides the first important building blocks to allow us to begin to shape the institutions of the next century.

As you know, there is a great deal of interest in the conclusions of the Task Force, and it is inevitable that information concerning the report will already have begun circulating. I believe that we need to finalise this process as soon as possible and make the report available publicly to provide the full context of the recommendations that have been made. I look forward to discussing this with you at the earliest opportunity. I would also like to suggest that you may wish to review the membership of the Steering Committee on UN Reform which is being ably guided by the Deputy Secretary-General, with a view to including my membership in the Committee. This would allow me to participate fully in the follow up to the release of the report, the subsequent approach we would take to it in the General Assembly and to the implementation of the recommendations.

I look forward to seeing you soon in New York. With best personal regards.

Yours sincerely,

Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director

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UN TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

REPORT TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

June 15, 1998

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE REASON FOR THIS REPORT

1. The Secretary-General, in his report "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950 of 14 July 1997), recognized the need for a more integrated, systemic approach to policies and programmes throughout the whole range of UN activities in the economic, social, and development fields. As part of this effort, he informed the General Assembly that he would, in consultation with Governments and the heads of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Centre on Human Settlements (Habitat), develop new measures for strengthening and restructuring those two organizations, based on General Assembly Resolutions 2997 (XXVII) and 32/162 and taking into account decisions and recommendations of the Governing Council of UNEP and the Commission on Human Settlements. He committed himself to make recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session in September 1998.

2. To assist him in this respect, in 1998 the Secretary-General constituted a Task Force composed of high-level advisors from governments, civil society, and within the United Nations. The membership of the Task Force is listed in Annex A and its Terms of Reference in Annex B.

3. The Task Force met four times: 1 April 1998 in New Delhi; 26-27 April in New York; 29-30 May in Bonn; and 13-15 June in Geneva.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4. The first major intergovernmental conference on the environment was the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in June 1972. That Conference adopted a farsighted Declaration and Programme of Action and led to the creation of UNEP by the General Assembly with a mandate to catalyze and coordinate environmental actions within the UN system. The General Assembly decided that UNEP's headquarters should be located in Nairobi, Kenya. The UNEP Governing Council became the world's primary environmental forum. The two decades following the Stockholm Conference saw many international actions to protect the environment, including the negotiation of many global and regional conventions.

5. The Stockholm Conference recognized that the built environment deserved special attention and recommended the holding of a further United Nations Conference on this subject. Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was held in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976. One of the perceptions that emerged in Vancouver and has been reinforced since then is that human settlements are an integral element of development and should be a high priority at the national level.

6. The Vancouver Conference decided on the Vancouver Declaration and Action Plan, which made national Governments and the international community aware of the plight of human settlements worldwide. It also led to the creation of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (commonly known as Habitat), which was established in 1978. In view of the substantial overlap between environmental and human settlements issues, Habitat was located in Nairobi alongside UNEP. Existing UN activities and programmes, including the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning established in the mid-1960s and the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation established by UNEP, were integrated into Habitat. Habitat was to service a new intergovernmental body, the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements, and carry out an integrated work programme including research, policy guidance, training, technical cooperation, and information. Mechanisms were put in place to encourage cooperation between UNEP and Habitat.

7. Twenty years after Stockholm, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. UNCED drew even more popular participation and media coverage than the Stockholm Conference, including greater participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other major groups of society from developing countries. Unlike the Stockholm Conference, UNCED was attended by scores of heads of Government. UNCED approved the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 (a compendium of actions needed to achieve sustainable development), and the non-legally binding Forest Principles. It also witnessed the signature of major conventions on climate change and biological diversity.

8. A second Habitat Conference (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996. It adopted the Istanbul Declaration, in which the nations present endorsed "the universal goals of ensuring adequate shelter for all and making human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive." The Habitat Agenda that was agreed on at Habitat II is the Global Plan of Action to improve human settlements conditions for the next

twenty years. Habitat is charged with coordinating its implementation among UN agencies and facilitating its application by Governments, as well as among other major groups of society.

9. From the time of the Stockholm Conference, it was recognized that environmental issues could not be treated as afterthoughts or dealt with solely by "end-of-the-pipe" approaches, but that environmental considerations must be integrated into the activities of sectoral and development-oriented institutions. Many changes of this kind occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, and the pace of change has accelerated since UNCED and Habitat II. As a result, the international agenda for environment and development has been transformed, and the context in which the United Nations must operate has changed radically. The changes within the UN system have been conceptual and organizational; meanwhile the context has been altered by the emergence or continuation of sweeping global trends.

10. The concept of *sustainable development* links economic, social, and environmental concerns, and has been adopted by the world community. Agenda 21 assigns a broad range of responsibilities for action to UN organizations and bodies, national Governments, and many other international and national groups. Environmental issues have appeared increasingly on the agendas of development-oriented institutions including UNDP, the World Bank, the regional multilateral development banks, and such specialized agencies as WHO, WMO, FAO, UNESCO, and UNIDO, and the UN Regional Economic Commissions. The "greening" of these bodies has been a necessary and welcome step, but the integration of environmental considerations in their programmes clearly needs to go further. There also has been a welcome recognition of the need to move in these directions among some sections of business and industry.

11. The *UN structure* was altered after UNCED by the creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which provides a high-level forum for environmental, developmental, social, and economic issues. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), a standing committee of the UN's Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), has brought together the UN bodies concerned with these issues and has helped to coordinate their work. The IACSD's system of designating agencies to be "Task Managers" for specific issue areas has decentralized the responsibility for developing coordinated policy positions in key areas of sustainable

development, especially as inputs to the CSD. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been established as a mechanism for financing activities to deal with some global environmental problems.

12. The establishment of the CSD, IACSD and the GEF, has created additional institutional arrangements alongside UNEP in the field of environment and sustainable development, and has highlighted the need to review the role of UNEP and the UNEP Governing Council in this context. The number of international legal instruments concerned with the environment has continued to grow. Demands on Ministers and Governments have increased because of the multiplication of high-level meetings, including those of the Conferences of Parties to international conventions. At the same time the financial resources available to support international and national actions for sustainable development have fallen far short of what is required, and UNEP's own Environment Fund has declined substantially.

13. Whereas there were institutional changes in the UN structure in the field of environment following UNCED, there were no such institutional developments in the field of human settlements following Habitat II. Rather, the Commission on Human Settlements was assigned a central role in monitoring, within the United Nations system, the implementation of the Habitat Agenda; acting a as catalyst to promote adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development; advising ECOSOC on human settlements issues; and assisting ECOSOC in coordinating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda within the United Nations system. Unfortunately, the situation deteriorated and Habitat lacked the capacity to carry out these tasks. The absence of any significant institutional change subsequent to the Habitat II Conference has hampered the effective implementation and follow-up of the outcome of that Conference.

14. Human demands on the global life support system continue to mount as poverty and affluence spread in parallel through the globe. Despite all the efforts made since the Stockholm Conference, the environment continues to deteriorate in many parts of the world. Some social, economic, and technological trends are exacerbating these problems. In addition, rapid urbanization is outstripping the provision of the services needed for health and welfare. New and unexpected problems will certainly continue to arise. Much more vigorous and effective coordinated action will then be required at all levels. Better monitoring and assessment, and enhanced means of providing effective information to Governments will also be crucial.

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15. International action will continue to be essential in meeting these challenges. The UN system must play a central part in this action, in cooperation with other components of society. Agenda 21 and the Istanbul Plan of Action broke new ground by addressing a broad spectrum of "stakeholders" who should be involved in the process of developing and implementing policies and actions for environment and human settlements.

III. NEEDS AND RESPONSES

16. These developments, trends, and challenges will influence and to a great extent lefine the role of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements. The ways of the past will not suffice in this new era. The Task Force has concluded that the UN and its governmental and non-governmental partners will need reformed structures and new methods in order to optimize their effectiveness.

17. The main roles of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements are to:

(a) Facilitate intergovernmental consensus and international cooperation on environmental components of policies and actions for sustainable development, inciuding legally binding commitments.

(b) Promote support, especially from developed to developing countries, so as to facilitate the implementation of agreed environmental and human settlements action plans, especially Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda.

(c) Involve, encourage, and support relevant "stakeholders" so that they make their appropriate contribution at global, regional, national, and local levels.

(d) Monitor and assess existing and emerging environmental problems, alert policy makers and the world public to them, and advocate and coordinate measures and action to tackle these problems and their causes, thereby reducing future risks.

(e) Provide support and resources to enable the effective implementation of global and national commitments relating to the environment and human settlements, and to build capacity for environmental action in developing countries.

18. The remaining sections of this Report consider:

(a) The linkages at the interagency level between the UN institutions concerned with environment, sustainable development, and human settlements, including environmental and environment-related conventions.

(b) Linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions.

(c) The internal needs of the UN system, especially those of UNEP and Habitat in Nairobi.

(d) The UN's role (the Earthwatch function) in collecting, evaluating, and disseminating environmental data and information, including the UN's responsibility for early and emergency response in the field of environment and human settlements.

(e) The intergovernmental structure of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements.

(f) The involvement of civil society and of profit-making enterprises.

(g) The possible role of a reconstituted UN Trusteeship Council.

A. Interagency linkages

19. The Task Force considers that the UN system needs a strong and respected UNEP as its leading environmental organization. For this purpose, UNEP needs to be given adequate financial, staff, and information capacities. In particular, it should be the recognized centre of a network of information, monitoring, assessment, and early warning, and should play to the full its role as an implementing agency of the GEF.

20. The Task Force's review of existing UN structures and arrangements in the field of environment and human settlements, linked to different issues and including in-depth examination of the energy and water sectors, has revealed that current UN activities are characterized by substantial overlaps, unrecognized linkages, and gaps. These flaws are basic and pervasive. They prevent the UN system from using its scarce resources to best advantage in addressing problems that are crucial to the human future; harm the credibility and weight of the United Nations in the environmental arena; and damage the UN's working relationship with its partners in and outside of Government.

21. Needed is a problem-solving, results-oriented approach that enables UN bodies and their partners to share information about their respective plans and activities; to inform and consult one another about proposed new initiatives; to contribute to a planning framework that permits the plans and activities of each participant to be reviewed within the framework of the whole range of activities being carried on by all participants; and to consult with each other with a view to developing an agreed set of priorities and on the measures through which each participating organization can best contribute to those priorities and achieve a more rational and cost-effective use of their respective capacities and resources.

22. These needs were recognized by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 248-250 of his 1997 report on reforming the United Nations, under the heading "issue management system."

Recommendation 1:

The Task Force recommends that in order to meet these needs with respect to the environment and human settlements, the Secretary-General should establish an Environmental Management Group (EMG). It would replace the existing Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group, which should be abolished.

23. The EMG would be chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP, supported by a secretariat. The Chair would report to the Secretary-General. The EMG would include as core members the main UN entities concerned with environment and human settlements. Particular meetings would involve additional UN entities, financial institutions, and organizations outside the UN system which have experience and expertise relevant to the issues on the agenda.

24. The EMG would be concerned with environment and human settlement issues in the context of the linkages between environment and development as defined at UNCED and subsequently elaborated. Habitat should be a prominent participant in the EMG, which should structure its operations so as to achieve an integrated UN work programme that bridges the gaps that have existed between the two areas.

25. The most important goal of the EMG should be to achieve effective coordination and joint action in key areas of environmental and human settlements concern. Another important objective should be to assist intergovernmental bodies in the area of environment and human settlements, in particular the UNEP GC and the Commission on Human Settlements, in the preparation of coordinated inputs to intergovernmental fora, notably the CSD. The EMG should report on an informational basis to the ACC, and should bring an environmental perspective into the work of the IACSD. The EMG should establish time-bound task forces or working groups covering clusters of issues in which representatives of the main institutions involved in a particular issue can work together quickly to solve important problems (for example, the recently reconstituted Ecosystem Conservation Group).

26. The EMG should include convention secretariats among its participants when needed. In addition to facilitating the kinds of linkages among conventions that are recommended in the next section, the EMG should act to ensure that there are appropriate linkages among activities that occur under conventions and relevant activities elsewhere in the international system.

27. The Task Force considered the question whether the EMG should produce a single UN environmental programme, similar to the former System-Wide, Medium-Term Environment Programme. The Task Force concluded that, in view of fast-moving global trends, a static programme, no matter how frequently it is updated, is bound to lag behind real needs. Instead, the EMG should create a dynamic process for review of planned activities and modification of goals and activities in light of new knowledge. However, subgroups of the EMG may agree on sharply focussed action plans as a means of coordinating actions at the "programme" level and allocating resources in the most effective manner.

28. Regional action and regional coordination are essential in the field of environment and human settlements. At the level of field operations, the existing system of UN Resident Coordinators is responsible for effective

coordination of activities related to environment and human settlements, and should be strengthened. The EMG should from time to time review the effectiveness of this coordination.

B. Linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions

29. The creation of a large number of legally binding instruments in areas of environmental concern has been a major success of the international community. However, as a result of decisions by Governments, the secretariats of environmental and environment-related conventions have been located in diverse geographic locations, with little regard to the functional relationships among conventions. That dispersal has resulted in loss of efficiency because of inability to take advantage of synergies among conventions and substantial costs through loss of economies of scale and fragmentation of administrative, conference, and infrastructure services. The period after UNCED led to a significant increase in activities related to environmental and environment-related conventions, and the number of international meetings of relevant treaty bodies has increased significantly. This has created additional burdens, especially for Ministers.

30. Bearing in mind that the main policy decisions under conventions are taken by their respective Conferences of Parties, which are autonomous bodies, strengthening of the linkages between conventions, with a view to achieving synergies and multiple benefits and promoting coherence of policies and actions, should be a long-term, strategic goal of the international community. Intergovernmental bodies, including the UN General Assembly at its 1997 Special Session (UNGASS), at paragraphs 119 and 123 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, have identified the need for more effective linkages and support. Decisions of UNGASS and prior decisions by the General Assembly and the UNEP Governing Council have provided a clear basis for UNEP to foster such linkages. Pursuant to these mandates, UNEP has sponsored annual meetings of the secretariats of selected environmental conventions, which have addressed common issues such as implementation at the national level, including development of relevant national legislation and institutions, capacity building, and technical assistance.

31. Further steps are needed to strengthen linkages and provide support that will ensure that the international community derives maximum benefit from the investments it has made in this system of international instruments.

Recommendation 2:

The Task Force recommends that, in addition to integrating convention secretariats and convention-related issues in the work of the EMG, the following actions should be taken by UNEP in pursuance of the above-mentioned mandate from UNGASS:

(a) UNEP's substantive support to global and regional conventions should be founded on its capacities for information, monitoring, and assessment, which need to be strengthened substantially and urgently for this purpose. UNEP should build its capacity and its networks of support in order to ensure the scientific underpinning of conventions, to respond to their requests for specialized analysis and technological assessments, and to facilitate their implementation.

(b) The Executive Director of UNEP should continue to sponsor joint meetings of heads of secretariats of global and regional conventions and use this forum to recommend actions to ensure that the work programmes established by the Conferences of Parties to the conventions, together with substantive support offered by UNEP, are complementary, fill gaps and take advantage of synergy, and avoid overlap and duplication. These meetings also should explore ways of fulfilling common substantive and administrative needs. Recommendations from these meetings should be presented to the Conferences of Parties by the respective secretariats.

(c) The Governing Council of UNEP should invite its President to consult the Presidents of Conferences of Parties to selected conventions on arrangements for periodic meetings between representatives of those conventions in order to address cross-cutting issues arising from the work programmes of these bodies and policy approaches being followed by them. The Executive Director of UNEP and the heads of the respective convention secretariats would organize and participate in these meetings. The conclusions of these meetings would be brought to the attention of UNEP's Governing Council and the respective Conferences of Parties by the respective secretariats.

(d) Concerned over the operational inefficiencies and costs arising from the geographical dispersal of convention secretariats, the Task Force recommends that the Secretary-General through the Executive Director of UNEP invite Governments and Conferences of Parties to consider the implications of this trend and ways to overcome the resulting problems. Every effort should be made to co-locate new conventions with other conventions in the same functional cluster (for example, biological resources, chemicals/waste, marine pollution) and with institutions with which they have a particular affinity. With respect to existing conventions, approaches should include promoting cooperation among the secretariats within each cluster, with a view to their eventual co-location and possible fusion into a single secretariat; and, in the longer term, the negotiation of umbrella conventions covering each cluster.

C. UNEP, Habitat, and the United Nations in Nairobi

32. It was recognized at the time of the Stockholm Conference that environment and human settlements issues are closely related. In consequence, the Vancouver Conference decided to locate Habitat alongside UNEP in Nairobi. Subsequent events have strengthened this relationship, and the worldwide trend toward urbanization seems certain to forge even closer links. Yet cooperation between UNEP and Habitat is still limited.

33. The Task Force discussed the Nairobi location of the United Nations and agreed that there is an urgent need to strengthen it. Nairobi is the only location of a major UN office in the developing world (the other major offices, in addition to the UN Headquarters in New York, are the UN Offices at Geneva and Vienna). The UN Office at Nairobi (UNON) should have arrangements in keeping with its status. There are several requirements for achieving this goal, in addition to the already mentioned need for closer coordination between UNEP and Habitat. They include better communications capabilities, improved physical security, an enhanced UN presence in Nairobi, and adequate access to the Regular Budget of the United Nations with respect to administrative costs. The Task Force:

(a) Commends the Government of Kenya for the efforts already taken to improve communication between the Nairobi location and the rest of the world but urges the Executive Director to work

together with the Government to enhance and strengthen communications capabilities by allowing unrestricted access to the Mercure satellite at a reasonable cost.

(b) Is aware of the socioeconomic problems of the region and the difficulty of ensuring physical security for UN staff and related personnel, yet recognizes that lack of security makes it difficult for UNEP and Habitat to attract and retain the highly qualified staff they must have to succeed in their missions.

Recommendation 3:

The Task Force recommends that the Secretary-General, through the Director General of UNON, request the Government of Kenya to address further the problem of physical security.

(c) **Recommendation 4:**

The Task Force recommends that other UN agencies, funds, and programmes should be stimulated to establish or expand activities in Nairobi, so as to transform the UN compound in Nairobi into a fully active UN Office.

(d) Notes that UNEP and Habitat are the only UN entities with global responsibilities that have their headquarters in a developing country, reflecting the commitment of the international community to strengthen capacity in developing nations to address the issues of environment and human settlements. Currently, these organizations conduct their work under difficult financial conditions.

Recommendation 5:

The Task Force recommends that UNON, which provides common services to UNEP and Habitat, be strengthened and be provided, as an exceptional measure, with sufficient resources from the regular budget to fulfill its tasks, and that the UN Headquarters consider the possibility of relieving UNEP and Habitat from paying rent.

(e) Believes that the Secretary-General acted wisely when he designated one individual to head UNEP, Habitat, and UNON.

Recommendation 6:

The Task Force recommends that UNEP, Habitat and UNON should continue in the future to be directed by one person.

(f) Sees the measures suggested above as important ingredients in a process that would enhance confidence in UNEP and Habitat, facilitating the attainment of a broader, more stable and predictable financial basis for the two organizations.

34. There are a number of ways in which UNEP and Habitat can benefit from their co-location. Among them are common administrative functions, common support institutions, common programme activities, and the possibility of co-located regional offices.

Recommendation 7:

The Task Force recommends that the Executive Director of UNEP and Executive Director of Habitat:

(a) Utilize the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) to unify the administration of the two organizations to the fullest extent feasible.

(b) Making full use of the synergistic co-location of the two organizations by establishing common institutions for:

- **Information and databases and the clearing house function;**
- **Press and information services;**
- **Library and other forms of support.**

(c) Ensure that the planning and implementation of the programmes of the two organizations are tightly linked through monitoring, assessment, and information and joint working parties on overlapping issues such as environmental health and the sustainability of cities. This should in no way compromise the distinctive nature of UNEP and Habitat but should be complementary.

(d) Assess the possibility of co-locating the regional offices of the two organizations.

35. The Task Force is concerned that UNEP and Habitat must have adequate human and financial resources if they are to fulfill the mandates of the Nairobi Declaration and decisions of the Governing Council and the UN General Assembly. Accordingly, the Task Force agrees with and underlines the decision of the May 1998 Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council that there is an urgent need for stable and predictable funding.

Recommendation 8:

The Task Force recommends that the Executive Director of UNEP and Executive Director of Habitat develop a financial strategy, in close cooperation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi, and report on it to the next meetings of the Governing Council and the Commission on Human Settlements. The financial strategy should address such matters as policies concerning secondment, including geographical balance; conditions for accepting in-kind contributions; the role of counterpart contributions in implementing the programmes of UNEP and Habitat; and the possibility of obtaining funds from foundations and other private sources.

D. Information, monitoring, assessment, and early warning

36. Pursuant to the Action Plan that was adopted at the Stockholm Conference, UNEP developed during the 1970s the Earthwatch system for assessing the condition of the global environment. Chapters 38 and 40 of Agenda 21 called on UNEP to strengthen Earthwatch, "especially in the areas of urban air, freshwater, land resources (including forests and rangelands), desertification, other habitats, soil degradation, biodiversity, the high seas and the upper atmosphere," and to make the resulting information more available for decision making.

37. UNEP was named as Task Manager for Earthwatch by IACSD. The mission of Earthwatch, as agreed in 1994 by the inter-agency Earthwatch Working Party, is "to coordinate, harmonize and integrate observing, assessment and reporting activities across the UN system in order to provide environmental and appropriate socioeconomic information for national and international decision making on sustainable development and for early warning of emerging problems requiring international actions. This should include timely information on the pressures on, status of and trends in key global resources, variables and processes in both natural and human systems and on the response to problems in these areas."

38. The Earthwatch system seeks to fulfill this mandate by integrating data and analyses from a variety of scientifically proven sources. These include, among others, the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS), the Global Resource Information Database (GRID), and three Global Observing Systems (the Global Climate Observing System, the Global Oceans Observing System, and the Global Terrestrial Observing System). Earthwatch uses up-to-date communications technologies to maintain an excellent site on the Worldwide Web. However, the Earthwatch system and its capabilities are largely unknown to the large universe of decision makers and environmentally concerned members of the public who could benefit from it. Moreover, there are gaps and deficiencies in the underlying systems of data collection and analysis, and in the methods by which data and analysis are translated into information that is understandable to non-experts. UNEP's depleted staff in the area of monitoring and assessment lacks the ability to identify and correct these flaws.

39. Human settlement conditions are monitored and assessed by Habitat, which also collects, collates, and publishes statistics on human settlements conditions and trends. A new monitoring and assessment framework for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda will involve inputs from partners in Government and other elements of society.

40. **Recommendation 9:**

The Task Force recommends that UNEP and Habitat:

(a) Must as matter of high priority develop their capacity in the field of information monitoring and assessment in order to serve as an "environmental guardian," mobilizing the

necessary resources from Governments, foundations, and international bodies.

(b) Carry out a short-term review to determine the steps needed to transform Earthwatch into an effective, accessible, well-advertised, science-based system that meets the needs of environmental and human settlements decision makers and the informed public and employs expert analysis and user feedback to correct deficiencies and update itself to meet changing needs.

(c) Take the actions, in intensive networking cooperation with national and international partner institutions, including NGOs and other major groups, that are needed to transform Earthwatch and sustain it as a fully effective system of information, monitoring, and assessment.

(d) Continue to elaborate problem-, action-, and result-oriented indicators for sustainable development in the field of environment and human settlements.

(e) Strengthen and further develop their capacity to serve as a clearing-house for collecting and disseminating information and data relevant to the condition of the environment and human settlements, including information from and to NGOs and other grassroots sources.

41. The Earthwatch system should be designed, *inter alia*, to alert the world to emerging environmental problems and threats. Information about such problems should be communicated in understandable terms to relevant decision makers, to the media, and to the informed public. Earthwatch also can contribute importantly to syntheses such as UNEP's *GEO* series and Habitat's periodic *Global Report on Human Settlements*.

42. Monitoring and assessment are closely linked to early warning of possible environmental emergencies through the prediction of extreme events or unusual environmental conditions. This kind of warning is extremely valuable for environmental and economic decision makers (for example, advance warning of drought conditions can enable farmers to plant drought-resistant crops). It may be possible to identify, on a long-term basis, potential "hot spots" or areas that are likely to be subject to rates of change

that exceed the limits of sustainability and thus pose threats to regional or global security.

43. **Recommendation 10:**

The Task Force recommends that UNEP and Habitat design and maintain the system of information, monitoring, and assessment so as to maximize its ability to provide early warning of possible environmental and human settlements emergencies. It further recommends that UNEP consider establishing a capability to identify potential environmental and environment-related conflicts and provide information and analysis to guide the development of preventive measures, for example by the negotiation of joint actions.

E. Intergovernmental fora

44. The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization. Organs and agencies of the United Nations can perform their functions efficiently only if they receive clear guidance from Member States. This is true in the field of environment and human settlements, as in all others. There is a need for intergovernmental fora to give that guidance.

45. There is a lack of coherent guidance at this level. Specialized agencies, for example, are responsible only to their governing bodies. In the environmental field, some specialized agencies have sectoral missions that correspond to specific elements within national Governments; hence, the agendas of those agencies may reflect very different priorities.

46. The only entities that can give consistent guidance to these different bodies are national Governments. In view of the important role that is played in the field of environment and human settlements by international institutions not under the authority of the Secretary-General, coordination cannot be fully effective unless Governments themselves give coordinated guidance. In short, coordination at the international level should begin at home.

Recommendation 11:

The Task Force recommends that Governments make additional efforts to achieve consistency of national positions in different intergovernmental fora. The EMG should assist Governments in

achieving such coherence by providing coordinated overviews of activities, plans, and policy approaches in the UN system as a whole.

47. **Recommendation 12:**

The Task Force recommends that UNEP Regional Offices should assist Governments in each region in their discussion of the global agenda, in defining priorities reflecting the particular needs of each region, and in promoting those regional priorities in the global agenda. In the implementation of regional priorities, UNEP should involve specialized agencies and other institutions concerned with environment and human settlements, as well as those that can provide financing.

48. Current intergovernmental fora are inadequate to give the kind of guidance that is needed in the environmental field. Those fora, consisting primarily of the UNEP Governing Council, the CSD, and meetings of the Conferences of Parties of leading conventions, are scattered as to time and place. They are attended by different constellations of ministers. They differ in their outcomes: some are decision making bodies, whereas others serve primarily as fora for policy debates, consensus-building, review of UN activities and plans, and exchanges with major groups. Ministers have expressed dissatisfaction because attendance at so many meetings is time-consuming for them. Moreover, the scattering of different meetings on different subjects makes it hard for participants to get the "big picture" perspective that is important for setting global priorities.

49. In addition, the traditional UN format for intergovernmental meetings does not fully meet the need for high-level consideration of environmental issues. The traditional UN format has featured formal discussion leading to agreement on the exact wording of a text. That format is ill-suited to many of the purposes which intergovernmental meetings on environment and human settlements should fulfill. Those purposes require a format that allows for actual debate and fewer statements, more in-depth discussions, more interaction with major groups, and structured efforts to produce innovative strategies that can meet tomorrow's challenges.

50. The Task Force affirms that the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Governing Council of UNEP have necessary and distinctive roles. The CSD provides a forum for high-level debate, including ministerial debate, that bridges and relates environmental, developmental, and

socioeconomic elements. The UNEP Governing Council is and should remain the primary forum within which Ministers and senior officials of Governments can review the environmental performance of the UN system as a whole and define priorities for new action.

51. **Recommendation 13:**

The Task Force recommends:

(a) That there should be an annual, ministerial-level, global environmental forum where environment ministers can gather to review and revise the environmental agenda of the United Nations in the context of sustainable development; oversee and evaluate the implementation of that agenda; discuss key issues in depth; identify challenges requiring international environmental cooperation and develop plans of action for meeting them; review the role of UNEP in relation to the GEF; and engage in a variety of discussions with their peers, with representatives of international institutions, and with major groups. In the years when it meets, the UNEP Governing Council should be that intergovernmental forum. In alternate years, the forum should be a special session of the Governing Council which would focus on issues of high priority. The venue of these special sessions should move from region to region, and regional issues should feature prominently on their agenda.

(b) That the agenda of each session of the Governing Council should be lively, designed to foster debates on topical issues and to attract media attention. Each session should cover topics of global importance and, in the case of meetings held in the regions, issues of special significance to the region where the meeting is held. Each session should be structured so as to provide input to that year's CSD meetings. A major item on the agenda of each session should be to review, from a cross-cutting perspective, the progress under the various environmental conventions.

(c) That the membership of the UNEP Governing Council should be made universal. This recommendation would not apply for

the Commission on Human Settlements because it is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC.

52. The Regular and Special Sessions of the Governing Council should receive reports from the Executive Director of UNEP on the work of the Environmental Management Group in promoting linkages among components of the UN system. The joint meetings of representatives of the Conferences of Parties of selected conventions that was recommended previously might be held "back to back" with sessions of the Governing Council.

53. There is a need for stronger links between environmental and human settlements at the intergovernmental as well as the interagency level. It would not be appropriate to merge the UNEP Governing Council with the UN Commission on Human Settlements, because those bodies have distinctive characters and partially different substantive agendas, and because they typically involve two distinct sets of ministers, those responsible for the environment and those responsible for housing, and it is unlikely that many Governments would send two ministers to the same meeting. However, the agendas of the two bodies should be cross-linked and designed to complement one another. Environmental matters should be standing items on the agenda of the Commission on Human Settlements and human settlements-related issues should occupy a similar place on the agenda of the Governing Council. To the extent feasible, the Nairobi meetings of the two bodies should overlap.

54. **Recommendation 14:**

The Task Force recommends that continuing international liaison on matters relating to the programme, budget, and operations of UNEP and Habitat be undertaken in Nairobi by the Committees of Permanent Representatives and High-Level Officials convened by the Executive Director on behalf of their Chairmen. In light of the changes recommended in this report, the Governing Council of UNEP should consider the future role of the High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials.

55. The special identity and distinctive character of Habitat should be retained, bearing in mind its mandate in UN General Assembly Resolution 32/162, as clarified and developed in the Habitat Agenda. A particularly important consideration for the Task Force is that Habitat has been designated as a focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and that the

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Commission on Human Settlements has a central role in monitoring its implementation.

56. Habitat has a large, demand-driven technical cooperation programme with a clear development agenda. The financial support for that programme comes solely from earmarked sources. The financial basis of Habitat has been seriously eroded in recent years, particularly in regard to core funds, which are crucial for its normative activities. If Habitat is to fulfill its role in promoting the implementation of Habitat Agenda, it is imperative that its normative functions be strengthened substantially. This will require a stronger financial base, especially with regard to core funding. In addition, existing overlaps between the technical cooperation programmes and the activities of other parts of Habitat should be eliminated.

57. **Recommendation 15:**

(a) That the Executive Director of Habitat consider ways of building capacity to facilitate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, particularly by strengthening the normative core activities of Habitat and developing it into a centre of excellence for urban development, and obtain the necessary financial resources.

(b) That the Commission on Human Settlements devote particular attention to its role in monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and take steps to prepare for the five-year review of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, which will occur in 2001.

58. The Task Force attaches the greatest significance to the effective use of GEF resources.

Recommendation 16:

The Task Force recommends that, consistent with the GEF Instrument, UNEP's role in providing environmental advocacy, analysis and advice in shaping GEF priorities and programmes should be strengthened, building on UNEP's current responsibility for ensuring the scientific underpinning of GEF activities. UNEP should act as catalyst and advocate for new directions and should take the lead among the three GEF implementing agencies in

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providing environmental advice. This role is consistent with UNEP's status as the lead agency in the UN system for identifying large-scale environmental threats and proposing remedial measures.

Recommendation 17:

The Task Force recommends that there be increased collaboration among the three GEF implementing agencies, in accordance with relevant GEF decisions.

F. Involvement of major groups

59. Global trends imply a growing role for elements outside Government in actions and decisions affecting the environment and human settlements, including activities and decisions of the UN system. Agenda 21 recognized this reality in its description in Chapters 24-32 of the roles of "major groups," including women, youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers. Governments and international bodies need the wisdom, experience, knowledge, and resources of these groups if they are going to make environmental and human settlements decisions, in the context of sustainable development, that are scientifically based, economically sound, suited to local conditions, and in accord with the desires of ordinary people.

60. The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the accompanying NGO Forum marked a breakthrough in the way major groups related to and sought to influence an intergovernmental decision making process. UNCED was another watershed event, attended by representatives of some 8000 NGOs from more than 160 countries. The Habitat II Conference in 1996 was attended by some 20,000 people and representatives of more than 500 local authorities. It featured innovative mechanisms for involving major groups from the beginning of the preparatory process:

- All Governments were invited to create National Habitat II Committees involving a wide spectrum of society.
- The Drafting Group that prepared the Habitat Agenda included representatives of local authorities and NGOs.
- The Conference itself featured a "partners' Committee" (Committee II) where representatives of civil society were

officially invited to assemble in their own forum and present their views to the representatives of Governments.

- UN officials joined with representatives of civil society in making possible a set of "Dialogues for the 21st Century," which explored in depth key issues concerning the future of cities, including water and energy.

- Statements produced in the dialogue sessions, together with the Chairperson's summaries of the discussions in Committee II, were included in the official record of Habitat II.

61. The CSD also has been a leader in its relations with major groups. CSD meetings are attended by representatives of a wide variety of interests. NGO participation is facilitated by a broad-based NGO Steering Committee. New participants are welcomed, and the CSD Secretariat prepares guidelines on a regular basis to help them participate and contribute. The practice at CSD meetings has been that representatives of major groups are allowed to speak virtually on an equal basis with representatives of Governments. CSD 6 in 1998 featured an innovative Industry Segment that included participants from various major groups. Additional "economic sector" segments are planned for future CSD meetings.

62. The extensive involvement of major groups at Habitat II and in the CSD has enlivened and enriched deliberations that are important to the world's future. Further steps are needed to ensure that this kind of involvement is the rule in the United Nations. They should begin with the Commission on Human Settlements and the UNEP Governing Council.

Recommendation 18:

The Task Force recommends:

(a) That the Commission on Human Settlements should consider establishing a special status for representatives of local authorities.

(b) That future sessions of the UNEP Governing Council and of the Commission on Human Settlements should be preceded by or overlap with substantial, structured meetings of major groups, covering the same substantive agenda topics that are

to be covered at the intergovernmental meetings. Representatives of the major groups should be given an opportunity to discuss the findings of these meetings in a round table meeting with ministers and should report this to the Governing Council and the Commission, which should record their responses.

(c) The practices of the Governing Council and the Commission on Human Settlements should be reformed, as an initial step, to come up to the standard of the CSD with respect to the involvement of major groups, and the Governing Council and Commission Secretariats should take steps (for example, the preparation of guidelines) to facilitate their participation. All other UN agencies involved with environment and human settlements should re-examine their rules and practices with the aim of encouraging and facilitating participation by major groups to the fullest extent practicable, consistent with the principle that the final decisions must rest with representatives of Governments. The Task Force further recommends that the Secretary-General issue general guidelines on these matters, and urges all UN agencies to conform with them.

63. It is apparent, in view of global trends and the need for cleaner methods of production, that environment and human settlements policy must be more integrated with economic decision making. This means that there must be a well balanced and effective continuing dialogue with business, industry, and other economic interests.

Recommendation 19:

The Task Force recommends that UNEP and Habitat examine, together with representatives of business, industry, and other economic interests, ways of involving that community constructively in their deliberations.

64. NGOs commonly must obtain consultative status with ECOSOC in order to gain access to intergovernmental meetings and other UN processes. Consultative status is not often denied; however, it currently takes about a year to obtain accreditation.

Recommendation 20:

The Task Force recommends that the ECOSOC accreditation process, and those of other UN entities concerned with environment and human settlements, be speeded up to the fullest extent possible.

65. NGOs from developing countries commonly have fewer resources and less capacity than those from industrialized nations. UNEP and Habitat should take actions to help them build their capacity for constructive participation.

Recommendation 21:

The Task Force recommends:

(a) That UNEP, Habitat, and UNDP systematically identify, in consultation with NGOs and NGO leaders, the needs of southern NGOs for capacity building, and act to meet those needs, both directly and by mobilizing funds from other donors. In so doing, they should keep in mind the importance of networking among NGOs, especially via electronic communications, and should help southern NGOs build their capacity in that area.

(b) That UNEP and Habitat establish a specialized unit to provide concerned NGOs with necessary and updated information and, together with UNDP, assist them technically and financially to carry out their work effectively at national, regional, and global levels. They also should establish mechanisms to ensure that the expertise and contributions of NGOs can be utilized by UNEP and Habitat.

(c) That NGOs be encouraged to strengthen their capacities to contribute effectively to the activities of UNEP and Habitat, including improving collaboration and networking among themselves and establishing focal points to liaise with UNEP and Habitat and global at regional levels.

66. Major groups from developing countries often find it difficult to attend international negotiations and meetings even when they have a right to do so, because of lack of funds for travel and subsistence.

Recommendation 22:

The Task Force recommends that, to the fullest extent possible, the UN agencies involved in environment and human settlements take steps to enable major groups from these countries to participate meaningfully in their activities, both through capacity building to make possible meaningful participation in negotiations and meetings and through establishment of funds to which Governments and others are encouraged to contribute.

67. **Recommendation 23:**

The Task Force recommends that UNEP and Habitat strengthen their system for receiving and responding to information from NGOs on environmental and human settlements problems, especially emerging problems. In this regard, UNEP and Habitat should encourage NGOs to provide information on new problems that might arise, for example, from the introduction of new technologies or new production activities or changes in economic or social policies.

G. The possible role of a reconstituted UN Trusteeship Council

68. In paragraphs 84-85 of his report on "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform," the Secretary-General recommended to the international community a "new concept of trusteeship" and proposed that the UN Trusteeship Council "be reconstituted as the forum through which Member States exercise their collective trusteeship for the integrity of the global environment and common areas such as the oceans, atmosphere and outer space," as well as linking the United Nations and civil society in addressing these areas of global concern. In a subsequent note to the General Assembly (A/52/849) the Secretary-General recalled this proposal and noted that it has become increasingly evident that issues relating to the integrity of the global environment and common areas have a direct bearing on the future of mankind and that those issues need to be understood and addressed in a strategic and long-term perspective. In that note, the Secretary-General suggested that the Task Force should elaborate further on his proposals.

69. In reviewing the proposals of the Secretary-General, the Task Force was cognizant of the note of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/52/850) concerning a Millennium Assembly and Millennium Forum. That

note proposed that the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly be designated as the "Millennium Assembly" and include a high-level segment to be called the Millennium Summit. The Summit would be asked to provide guidance to the United Nations for meeting the challenges of the new century, including such matters as the nature and fundamental goals of the United Nations and the way it should relate to and interact with the growing number of international institutions, an increasingly robust global civil society, and ever more integrated global markets and systems of production. The Secretary-General's note also proposed that NGOs and other civil society actors organize a Millennium Forum to be held in conjunction with the Assembly.

70. In the same note to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General announced that, in order to facilitate focused discussions and concrete decisions, he would prepare a report on the theme of the Millennium Assembly, "The United Nations in the twenty-first century." The report would draw on a series of informal events involving Member States and other actors to be held in regional centres around the world; on events of a more specialized nature in the United Nations; and on the results of consultations currently taking place within the ACC.

71. The Task Force also recalled the decision of the UNEP GC at its recent fifth Special Session on the "Revitalization, reform and strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme." In that decision the Governing Council, *inter alia*, decided to review at its next regular session the status of the ongoing reform of UNEP and to provide the Millennium Assembly with its conclusions concerning institutional arrangements within the United Nations system for dealing with the environmental challenges of the next century and the role of UNEP in that context. The Task Force believes that these conclusions will provide an important environmental perspective to the Millennium Assembly and enhance the preparatory process.

72. Recommendation 24:

The Task Force recommends:

(a) That the Executive Director of UNEP, in preparing for the next regular session of the Governing Council, undertake wide-ranging consultations concerning institutional arrangements for dealing with the environmental challenges of the next century.

(b) That these consultations include Government representatives, NGOs, and other representatives of civil society and the private sector, and culminate in a two-day environment forum to be held immediately before and in conjunction with the next session of the Governing Council. The forum should suggest to both the Governing Council and the Millennium Assembly and Forum forward-looking proposals for the protection of the global environment, including the possible future role of the Trusteeship Council.

(c) That the Commission on Human Settlements provide forward-looking perspectives on human settlements issues as part of this process. These perspectives also would contribute to the preparations for the Istanbul + 5 review of the Habitat Agenda to be undertaken in 2001.

Annex A. Membership of the Task Force

Task Force Members

Mr. Klaus TOEPFER (Chair)
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme

Ms. Maria Julia ALSOGARAY
Minister of Natural Resources and Sustainable Development
Argentina

Dr. Christina AMOAKO-NUAMA
Minister of Education
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Ambassador John ASHE
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Ms. Julia CARABIAS LILLO
Minister of Natural Resources and Fisheries
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Mr. Nitin DESAI
Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs

Ambassador Lars-Goran ENGFELDT
Permanent Representative of Sweden to UNEP and UNCHS

Ms. Guro FJELLANGER
Minister of Environment
Norway

Mr. Jean-Pierre HALBWACHS
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Sir Martin HOLDGATE
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Mr. Ashok KHOSLA
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Mr. Martin KHOR
Director, Third World Network
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Ambassador Tommy KOH
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Ms. Julia Marton LeFEVRE
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Mr. James Gustave SPETH
Administrator
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Mr. Maurice STRONG (ex-officio)
Special Advisor to the Secretary-General

Mr. Mostafa K. TOLBA
President
International Centre for Environment and Development
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Ambassador Joseph TOMUSANGE
High Commissioner of the Republic of Uganda to India

Ambassador Makarim WIBISONO
Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

Mr. Timothy E. WIRTH
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Mr. Michael ZAMMIT CUTAJAR
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Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC)

Advisors to the Task Force

Mr. Peter Thacher

Hon. Eileen Claussen

Secretariat to the Task Force

Mr. Per Bakken

Mr. Donald Kaniaru

Mr. Donatus Okpala

Ms. Lesly Puyol

Mr. Thomas Stoel

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Annex B. Terms of reference of the Task Force

To review existing structures and arrangements through which environment and environment-related activities are carried out within the United Nations, with particular reference to those departments, Funds and Programmes which report to the Secretary-General, but taking into account also the relevant programmes and activities of the specialized agencies;

In this respect to focus particularly on the distinctive functions of policy, development of norms and standards, programme development and implementation and financing, as well as relationships amongst these functions;

To evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of existing structures and arrangements and make recommendations for such changes and improvements as will optimize the work and effectiveness of the United Nations environmental work at the global level and of UNEP as the leading environmental organization or "authority," as well as the role of UNEP as the principal source of environmental input into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development; and

To prepare proposals, for consideration by the Secretary-General and subsequent submission to the General Assembly, on reforming and strengthening UN activities in the environmental and human settlement areas.

Annex C. List of abbreviations

ACC	UN Administrative Committee on Coordination
CSD	UNns Commission on Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FAO	UN Food and Agricultural Organization
GA	UN General Assembly
GC	Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEMS	UNEP Global Environment Monitoring System
GRID	UNEP Global Resource Information Database
Habitat	UN Centre for Human Settlements
IACSD	Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UN	United Nations
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNON	UN Office at Nairobi
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

UNITED
NATIONS

EP

Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/HLC/3/INF/2
3 October 1998

ENGLISH ONLY

HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS
Third meeting
Buenos Aires 10 November 1998
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

REFORM OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements to the Secretary-General

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the summary of the work of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements by Klaus Töpfer, dated 28 July 1998.

* UNEP/HLC/3/1

Na.98-2796 081098

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For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

Annex

UNITED NATIONS TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Summary by Klaus Töpfer, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi 1/

The United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements was proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his seminal report on Reform "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform". The Task Force met four times under my chairmanship and completed its deliberations on 15 July 1998. The Task Force took as its departure point the conviction of the Secretary-General that the United Nations must take the lead "in building a new international system through greater unity of purpose, greater coherence of efforts and greater agility in responding to an increasingly dynamic and complex world". In this regard, the Task Force also shared a common conviction that the institutional fragmentation and loss of policy coherence over the last few years had resulted in a loss of effectiveness in the work of the United Nations in the area of environment and human settlements.

The contribution of the Task Force to developing the institutional response to environmental and human settlements challenges has to be seen in the new international context within which the United Nations operates.

In this regard, following the end of the Cold War and the advent of a multi-polar international order and its rapidly shifting political environment, we have to come to terms with emerging trends that have far-reaching implications for international cooperation. The first is the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, which is causing major transformations in the patterns of world economic interdependence.

The rapid globalization of financial and capital markets with their attendant instabilities, the major changes in the content and direction of international trade, the rapid spread of technological innovations, the new challenges that nation States face as political units in being able to control the changes taking place, the emergence of new and influential actors including transnational corporations and non-governmental organizations, as well as the growing strength and new modes of expression of civil society at all levels, all pose challenges and opportunities to the international community.

We must also, however, realize that, while the new international order increases interaction among all States, it maintains deep divisions between different groups of countries and between people within countries. It effectively segregates a large portion of the world's population and prevents it from sharing and benefits provided by technological and scientific

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1/ First published on the world wide web by Linkages Journal in its issue of 28 July 1998, Volume 3, Number 3.

advances. The emergence of a disjointed world economy and divided global society must not be seen as an inescapable condition: instead we must seize the opportunities that exist to foster a new spirit of international cooperation based on a realistic assessment of our common interests.

It is in this context that all countries, developed and developing, face the challenge of environmental sustainability, in the awareness that we can no longer blindly trust in the regenerative capacity of ecosystems. The problems of environmental sustainability and resource use are closely linked to social demands, demographic pressures and poverty in developing countries, counterposed against the excessive and often wasteful consumption habits in developed countries.

One characteristic common to practically all developing countries is the mismatch between financial resources and social, environmental and economic demands. In particular, as social demand for housing, nutrition, health and education grow, the financial capacity to meet them is diminishing rapidly, especially for countries burdened by debt.

These trends bring into sharp relief the urgent need for sustainable development based on meeting social, environmental and economic requirements. Sustainable development efforts will, in the coming millennium, face an increasingly heterogenous set of situations as we come to the realization that general recipes no longer work. We need differentiated approaches, tailor-made solutions and specific answers which correspond more closely to unique circumstances, problems and situations. To achieve this and to make real progress in sustainable development will place enormous demands on policy design and implementation capacities at all levels.

A critical element of the sustainable development equation is the need to confront the relentless destruction of our planet's natural resources, increasing transboundary pollution and new global environmental problems that are creating flashpoints in international relations. We have to come to the realization that our world is being threatened either because people have too much or too little. The pollution of poverty remains one of the most destructive and inhumane forces on this planet.

Compounding national and international ecological degradation is the trend in environmental degradation at a planetary level. Ozone layer depletion, the prospect of global warming, increased toxic pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, the loss of freshwater resources, the proliferation of hazardous wastes are only some of the chronic problems we face for which we need institutions equal to the unprecedented task facing humanity: to slow down, stop and ultimately reverse the wasting of our planet.

If we allow these trends to continue unabated, new tensions will be created which will imperil the political stability of the world. The greatest danger will be that we will fail to see the environmental dimensions behind new conflicts and will seek resolution by force. We must accept that our notion of what constitutes "security" remains stubbornly narrow. The time has come to recognize the environmental dimension of individual and collective security. We must also realize that national, regional and global security are indivisible and that if we are to tackle environmental trends

with serious implications for security, there is no alternative to the fostering of political will and global cooperation and the generation of new resources to an extent far beyond anything seen today.

On the part of developing countries, far-reaching initiatives will be required to stop forest destruction, establish biological reserves, pursue environmentally sustainable energy and industrial policies and conserve land and water resources. This will require those countries to take decisions which have political and social risks. While the leadership to take these decisions must come from the developing countries themselves, the developed countries must assist. Global efforts for environmental protection must be part of a broader commitment by developed countries to help developing countries realize their economic aspirations. If decision makers in developing countries believe that they can create jobs and meet economic objectives while addressing international and domestic environmental problems, their cooperation can be assured. These understandings between North and South must transcend the traditional environmental agenda and incorporate initiatives as diverse as international trade and debt, development and assistance, energy and technology transfer. In short, they must make development environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.

If we accept the above propositions, we must also rethink the role of multilateral institutions and review their capacity to address these issues. It is precisely in this perspective that the proposals of the Task Force must be viewed.

Twenty-five years after the historic Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, which established the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and more than five years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro, the elevation of environment on the international political agenda has led to a proliferation of new programmes and institutional arrangements designed to address environmental concerns, often without coordination. The international community must begin to address in a coherent manner whether, in the new international political context at the end of the twentieth century, the institutions it has put in place to manage the critical questions related to the environmental integrity and sustainability of the planet have the capacity to deal with those problems in all their immensity.

In its more than twenty-five years of existence, UNEP has seen some impressive achievements, including rapid advances in scientific knowledge of environmental threats and the development of international policy and legal instruments, as well as national and regional institutions to respond to those threats. This work, however, has primarily taken a sectoral or issue-based approach. In the five years since Rio, we have struggled to inject the concept of environmental and social sustainability into the way we design and implement our economic development plans but, so far, with only moderate success.

In a similar vein, the United Nations Conference in Vancouver in 1976 imparted a sense of urgency to the political leadership towards the process of urbanization. It stressed the moral imperative - to improve the living

conditions of the urban poor through better architectural designs, low cost housing and appropriate technologies. It translated the concern for human settlements by establishing national ministries of urban development.

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul identified the connections among the political, economic, environmental and social factors intrinsic to equitable and sustainable development of human settlements. The Conference was a watershed in the emergence of a new vision of urban development.

Ever since we initiated these conscious and cooperative ventures to rationally manage earth's natural resources and human settlements, we are still confronted with indisputable evidence that the struggle to keep our planet habitable is still at a critical juncture.

The continuum that spans the Vancouver Conference with Habitat II at Istanbul has also been marked by far-reaching changes. The process of globalization of economic markets and trade has created new patterns of economic competition and environmental problems. Urban based economies now contribute a major share of GDP in most countries.

From an economic standpoint, urbanization has led in some cases to improved standards of living from higher household incomes. From an environmental perspective, this growth has been achieved in the face of rapid urban deterioration. Urban environmental conditions are central to the economic prospects of all countries. It must be recognized that environment affects the productivity of labour through its impact on health, the availability of clean water, air and land.

As with other patterns of resource use on our planet today, the outstanding characteristic of urbanization is the great disparity between the conditions of the rich and the poor. The problems of urban environmental degradation are not the results of urban poor's attempt to make room in cities for their survival, but reflect the inability of the institutional structures to cope with their needs.

The solution of environmental problems and implementation of sustainable development provides a unique opportunity for integrating social and economic concerns with the ecological, cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the natural and built environment.

In the final analysis, the environment is a political issue. Whether or not solutions are effectively applied will continue to rely upon politics and policy, upon the aptitude of leaders, parties and their constituents and upon a complex cross-referencing and cooperative system involving international agencies, national environmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international conventions and agreements.

The report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements which was presented to the Secretary-General on 15 June 1998 is an attempt at addressing the commonly held conviction that the institutional fragmentation and lack of policy coherence over the last twenty years had resulted in a loss of effectiveness in the work of the United Nations in the area of the environment and human settlements.

The group of distinguished policy makers, academics and members of the non-governmental community who formed the Task Force examined the existing organizational arrangements of the United Nations to determine how they might be changed to better meet international environmental and human settlements challenge.

The goal of the Task Force was to make recommendations about how the existing United Nations structures and arrangements in the field of the environment and human settlements could be optimally designed to deal with the problems that will concern the global community in the next decade.

In making its recommendations, the Task Force took the approach that what was required to address the immediate needs for revitalizing the work of the United Nations in the environment and human settlements area was an incremental and practical approach that could be implemented in the short to medium term and had the likelihood of finding political consensus around its objectives. In my view, the recommendations contained in the report should be seen as the commencement of a longer term approach to equip the United Nations to concretely address the pervasive environmental and sustainable development problems both of the present as well as of the future. In this regard, the recommendations of the Task Force provide the first important building blocks to allow us to begin to shape the institutions that would be capable of meeting the immense challenges that the international community will face in the next century.

The main findings of the report are reflected in 24 recommendations contained in the seven chapters of the report spanning inter-agency, intergovernmental and programmatic issues and are designed to enhance coordinated action by the United Nations and begin the process of improving overall policy coherence. Decisions concerning the implementation of the recommendations fall within distinct areas, some within the purview of the Secretary-General or the Executive Director of UNEP, while others accrue to the General Assembly or the governing bodies of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat). The recommendations will undoubtedly be debated at some length, but again, in my view, they represent the sum of the measures that require to be taken now to revitalize the essential work of the United Nations on environment and human settlements.

The first set of recommendations has to do with improving the inter agency coordination within the United Nations. One of the paradoxes inherent in the concept of sustainable development is the need to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into broader economic and development policies. Sustainable development is a whole greater than its parts. And this is a task that no one agency can do on its own. But at the same time there is always the danger of environmental issues getting immersed in competing and often contradictory claims. Clarification of the roles of the many players in the environment and sustainable development arena is therefore crucial if we are to prove equal to the ecological challenges that we face today.

The Task Force was convinced that there was significant overlapping and lack of coordinated action in the United Nations framework concerning environment and human settlements policies. The Task Force recommended the establishment of an inter-agency Environment Management Group which would use

an "issue management approach" that had been outlined by the Secretary-General in his report on "Renewing the United Nations". The Environmental Management Group will be chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and would be designed to be a problem solving, results-oriented approach to achieving effective coordination and joint action on key environmental and human settlements issues throughout the United Nations systems. An important innovation would be the inclusion of non-United Nations international institutions on the development of specific issues.

The second important set of recommendations deals with the different conventions and protocols on the environment. One of the central mechanisms by which international cooperation can be fostered is through the negotiation and agreement of international laws aimed at fostering the sustainable management of shared and common property resources.

After Rio, the development of a distinct international law of the environment has been nothing less than remarkable. The total number of such agreements is rising whilst the average time taken to negotiate each treaty is steadily decreasing. Moreover, within the same time frame, the scale of problems to be addressed has widened - from the regional through the hemispheric to the global - while the total number of sovereign states that have to sit down to broker such deals has gradually burgeoned. New concerns and principles - precaution, inter and intragenerational equity, scientific uncertainty, sustainable development - have also arisen in recent years and now need to be factored into the negotiation process.

Clearly, the various conventions and protocols on the environment represent the most outstanding achievement of the global community to date. But the Task Force noted the lack of coordination amongst the conventions though there were many areas of common concern and distinct overlappings. The geographic dispersal of the various environmental convention secretariats is addressed, with the report suggesting their clustering and possible future co-location, as well as the possibility of negotiating umbrella conventions. Concern was expressed regarding the dispersal of environmental convention secretariats (such as in Bonn, Geneva, Montreal, Nairobi), which has resulted in inefficiencies, substantial costs through loss of economies of scale and fragmentation of common services. The Task Force recommends that governments and the conventions' conferences of Parties consider the implications of these inefficiencies and additional costs and seek ways of addressing these problems. It also calls on UNEP to build its scientific and information capacity and networking in support of the conventions.

The third set of recommendations relates to Nairobi as the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. Both these institutions have now been headquartered in Nairobi for 25 and 20 years respectively. The recommendation was not to merge these two institutions. They should continue to exist as two independent entities, but their work should be more integrated in administrative terms and take advantage of synergies at the programme level. There should only be one person responsible for UNEP, UNCHS (Habitat) and the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Task Force emphasized that it was essential for the United Nations system to have a stable and strengthened headquarters in Nairobi and the elevation of the status of Nairobi to the

same level as other headquartered stations in Geneva and Vienna. The Task Force also made a clear recommendation concerning the improvement of information and communication technologies and the achievement of a better security situation in Nairobi and Kenya.

The fourth major set of recommendations of the Task Force relates to the intergovernmental framework. There have been complaints that ministers of the environment and human settlements had to travel too much around the world to attend conventions and high level segments of international negotiations. Clearly, it was not possible for the ministers to be available for each one of them. In order to enhance intergovernmental policy coherence it recommends that an annual, ministerial-level, global environmental forum be convened biennially as part of the regular session of the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi. In alternate years, this forum should be a special session of the Council and held in different venues, alternating between regions, and should provide a platform for governments to regularly discuss and take action on important and emerging environmental and sustainable development issues. Regional issues would be included in the agendas of alternate meetings, which should be held before the meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development which would also assist in providing a coordinated environmental input into the work of the commission.

The fifth important issue was information, monitoring and assessment. The Task Force recognized the critical need for monitoring and assessment leading to information for decision-making and recommended that UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) further develop their capacity to serve as an "environmental guardian" and transform Earthwatch into an effective, accessible science based system that meets the needs of decision makers. This could include the participation of non-governmental sources and the elaboration of result oriented indicators in the field of the environment and human settlements. This monitoring and assessment system should maximize its ability to provide early warning of possible environmental and human settlements emergencies and the basis for the development of measures for conflict prevention.

In my view, the need for such information systems is an urgent necessity, particularly in view of the nature of emerging issues that have to be dealt with in a timely manner. In particular, an early warning system that would help to mitigate the effects of recent emergencies such as forest fires and the massive environmental and financial cost involved is a necessity for the international community.

The sixth important issue relates to the participation of civil society. In all the millions of words written about the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, very little attention has been paid to the fact that governments committed themselves to a political strategy for mobilizing their people and educating them on the need for a transition to sustainable development, through popular involvement in national and local level strategies for implementing the transition.

Chapter after chapter in Agenda 21, on issues such as poverty, urban settlements, health, population control as well as the mountain development, forestry, desertification, biodiversity, agriculture, management of water resources and the management of toxic wastes, national and local governments are committed to educate and work in consultation with local communities. The conclusions of the Earth Summit went well beyond a focus on non-governmental organizations, to develop a strategy for the involvement of much wider layers of society from transnationals down to local communities.

There are encouraging signs in the empowerment of communities and the growth of environment-oriented non-governmental organizations in civil society and their increasing recognition in all regions as powerful mechanisms to advance sustainable development. The Task Force recommended a greater involvement of non-governmental organizations as well as other major groups, such as industry, business and trade unions in the inter-governmental process. There were clear recommendations to involve these groups in inter-governmental deliberations and to develop further programmatic relationships utilizing the various perspectives of these groups.

The final set of recommendations provides for a more open and forward looking process to address issues of the future. The Task Force proposed that wide-ranging consultations be undertaken by the UNEP Executive Director concerning institutional arrangements for dealing with the environmental and human settlements challenges of the next century. These consultations would include representatives of governments, civil society and the private sector and would culminate in two-day "environment forum" to be held early next year. This forum would then provide forward-looking proposals for the protection of the global environment, including future institutions, to the forthcoming Millennium Assembly and Forum in the year 2000.

I will be putting in place a flexible process through which innovative ideas and proposals can be discussed widely among government representatives, non-governmental organizations the scientific and academic community and others with a view to making the "environment forum" an innovative source of ideas and proposals to contribute to the forthcoming Millennium Assembly and Forum.

In conclusion, therefore, the recommendations of the Task Force for strengthening the environmental and human settlements work of the United Nations may not be revolutionary, but should be seen as the first practical steps in laying the foundations of the institutions that are required for the next century. It is my hope that this will be the context in which they are discussed, in an open and honest manner, and that this provides the basis for the further essential work we still have to undertake internally within UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) to make these institutions worthy of the support of the international community.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE

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Ambassador John Ashe, Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda
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Ambassador Lars-Goran Engfeldt, Permanent Representative of Sweden to UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat)
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UNITED NATIONS

EP

Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/HLC/3/INF/3
8 October 1998

ENGLISH ONLY

HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS
Third meeting
Buenos Aires, 10 November 1998
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

OTHER MATTERS

Complementarity of the core activities of the United Nations Environment Programme and its Global Environment Facility interventions

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the note by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the complementarity of the core activities of UNEP and its Global Environment Facility (GEF) interventions, dated 9 September 1998.

* UNEP/HLC/3/1.

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Annex

United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة · 联合国环境规划署

PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE

ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

UNEP

9 September 1998

Note of the Executive Director of UNEP
to the Twelfth Meeting of the GEF Council,
Washington, D.C., 14-16 October 1998.

INTRODUCTION

1. At the eleventh meeting of the GEF Council, held in New Delhi, India on 30-31 March 1998, the Chief Executive Officer was requested, in conformity with Paragraph 22 and Annex D, paragraph 7, of the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF*, to transmit: the Joint Summary of the Chairs for the Council meeting; the Report on the Second Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund; and, the GEF evaluation reports to, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank, inviting each of them, in its role as an Implementing Agency, to take note of the replenishment and to accept and take appropriate action on the policy recommendations.

2. The Fifth Special Session of the Governing Council of UNEP, held in Nairobi on 20-22 May 1998 considered these matters. In decision SS.V/6 on the Global Environment Facility, the Council welcomed the results of the first meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, held in New Delhi from 1 to 3 April 1998. It also welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Second Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility and noted the policy recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the Global Environment Facility to maximise its effectiveness and impacts, while respecting the prerogatives of the governing bodies of the implementing agencies.

3. Paragraph 2(c) of the Policy Recommendations for the Second GEF Replenishment Period provides that "***Aware that UNEP's mandate includes strong focus on the global environment, participants recommend that UNEP should better integrate GEF activities and its own operations on the global environment and should ensure synergy between UNEP's regular activities addressing global environmental issues and its proposals for GEF funding. At the same time, UNEP's proposals for GEF funding should be consistent with the principle of additionality - GEF should not fund activities that are part of UNEP's mandate and regular programs.***"

/...

4. Taking into account paragraph 22 and Annex D, paragraph 7, of the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF*, the Participants recommended that each Implementing Agency prepare for Council review in 1998 a strategy and timetable showing how the Agency will integrate global environmental activities into its own policies and programs and report regularly, thereafter, to the Council on its implementation. The present note is submitted by the Executive Director of UNEP to the twelfth meeting of the Council pursuant to this request, and taking into account paragraph 2(c) of the policy recommendations for the second replenishment.

I. A New UNEP for the Next Millennium

5. The need to strengthen and equip the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in order that it can effectively perform a refocused role in a new and evolving international context, has been highlighted recently in several intergovernmental fora. The nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, held in Nairobi from 27 January to 7 February 1997, adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP which recognises that UNEP has been and should continue to be the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment. This declaration states that UNEP's **"role is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations System, and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment."**

6. To this end, the Ministers and heads of delegations attending the nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, agreed on the following core elements of the focused mandate of a revitalised UNEP:

"(a) To analyse the state of the global environment and assess global and regional environmental trends, provide policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and to catalyse and promote international co-operation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available;

(b) To further the development of international environmental law aiming at sustainable development, including the development of coherent inter-linkages among existing international environmental conventions;

(c) To advance the implementation of agreed international norms and policies, to monitor and foster compliance with environmental principles and international agreements and stimulate co-operative action to respond to emerging environmental challenges;

(d) To strengthen its role in the co-ordination of environmental activities in the United Nations System in the field of the environment, as well as its role as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise;

(e) To promote greater awareness and facilitate effective co-operation among all sectors of society and actors involved in the implementation of the international environmental agenda, and to serve as an effective link between the scientific community and policy makers at the national and international levels; and

(f) To provide policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building to Governments and other relevant institutions."

7. The Nineteenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, convened for the purpose of undertaking an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, held in New York from 23 to 27 June 1997, reconfirmed the role of UNEP as the principle United Nations body in the field of environment, in conformity with Agenda 21 and the Nairobi Declaration. Paragraph 123 of the Programme for the further Implementation of Agenda 21 provides that **"UNEP is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations System, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment."** In addition, the General Assembly took note of the UNEP Governing Council decision 19/31 of 4 of April 1997 concerning governance, and underlined the fact that the revitalised UNEP should be supported by adequate, stable and predictable funding.

8. The General Assembly also noted that *"at the international and national levels there is a need for, inter alia, better scientific assessment of ecological linkages between the conventions; identification of programmes that have multiple benefits; and enhanced public awareness-raising for the conventions. Such tasks should be undertaken by UNEP in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Governing Council and in full co-operation with the Conferences of Parties to and governing bodies of relevant conventions."* The General Assembly also recommended that *"the role of UNEP in further development of international environmental law should be strengthened, including the development of coherent inter-linkages among relevant environmental conventions in co-operation with their respective Conferences of the Parties or governing bodies. In performing its functions related to Conventions signed at Rio or as a result of it and other relevant conventions, UNEP should strive to promote the effective implementation of these conventions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the respective conventions, and the decisions of their respective Conferences of Parties."*

9. The General Assembly also drew attention to the relationship between UNEP and the Commission on Sustainable Development, and recommended that UNEP should continue providing effective support to the Commission, through, *inter alia*, scientific, technical and policy formulation, analysis and advice on global environmental issues.

10. In addition, the report of the Secretary General on "Renewing the United Nations: Programme for Reform" (A/51/950) provides that *"UNEP is the environmental voice of the United Nations and the principal source of the environmental inputs into the work of the CSD. High priority must be given to it according to its status, strength and access to resources it requires to function effectively as the environmental agency of the world community. This has been confirmed by the Nairobi Declaration, adopted by the UNEP Governing Council, at its nineteenth session, in February 1997. UNEP's role as the focal point for harmonisation and co-ordination of the environment-related activities must be strengthened, and the Secretary General intends to lend his full support to this process."*###

11. In his report, the Secretary General also announced that he intends to provide further recommendations on the reform and strengthening of United Nations activities in the environment and human settlements areas. In order to prepare recommendations to the Fifty-second Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Secretary General appointed a Task Force under the Chairmanship of the Executive Director of UNEP. The Task Force was mandated, *inter alia* to; review existing structures and arrangements through which environment and environment-related activities are carried out within the United Nations; and to prepare proposals, for consideration by the Secretary General and subsequent submission to the General Assembly on, reforming and strengthening activities in the environmental and human settlements areas.

12. The report of the Task Force was submitted in June 1998 to the Secretary General. The Task Force attached the greatest significance to the effective use of GEF resources and recommended that *"Consistent with the GEF Instrument, UNEP's role in providing environmental advocacy, analysis and advice in shaping GEF priorities and programmes should be strengthened, building on UNEP's current responsibility for ensuring the scientific underpinning of GEF activities. UNEP should act as catalyst and advocate for new directions and should take the lead among the three GEF Implementing Agencies in providing environmental advice. This role is consistent with UNEP's status as the lead agency in the UN system for identifying large-scale environmental threats and proposing remedial measures "*.

13. The Task Force also recommended that there be increased collaboration among the three Implementing Agencies, in accordance with relevant GEF decisions.

14. In the light of these developments, the Executive Director of UNEP, in his policy statement to the Fifth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council (Annex 1), held in Nairobi on 20-22 May 1998, proposed the following areas of concentration of UNEP activities for the short and medium term:

a. Emergency response capacity and strengthening of the early warning and assessment functions of UNEP;

b. Co-ordination and development of environmental policy instruments;

c. Freshwater;

d. Industry and technology transfer; and,

e. Support to Africa.

15. Decision SS.V/2 of the Fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council on the Revitalisation, Reform and Strengthening of UNEP, welcomed the proposals of the Executive Director for areas of concentration of the activities of UNEP. The Executive Director was accordingly requested *"to re-examine the 1998-1999 programme of work approved by the Governing Council at its nineteenth session, in the light of the core elements of the focused mandate of the Nairobi Declaration, and the proposed areas of concentration, with due regard to the needs of environmental education, within existing programme of work; and to develop further his new proposals in this regard in the context of the programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001, and to make recommendations thereon to the Governing Council at its twentieth session"*. The twentieth session of the Governing Council of UNEP will be held in early 1999.

16. In the light of the importance attached to strengthening the role of UNEP in the GEF as called for by the Nairobi Declaration, the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council adopted two decisions (SS.V/6 concerning the strengthening of the role of UNEP in the GEF, and SS.V/7 concerning Land Degradation) relevant to UNEP's role in the GEF. #####

II. The New Profile of UNEP in the GEF

17. The governing bodies of UNEP have called for the strengthening of the role of the organisation as an Implementing Agency of the GEF. The Executive Director of UNEP, in his statement on 1st April 1998 at the first meeting of the GEF Assembly presented UNEP's priorities in the GEF. The CEO/Chairman of the GEF in his address to the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council suggested areas of intervention of UNEP in the GEF based on its comparative advantage.

A. The need for the strengthening of the role of UNEP in the GEF (Decision SS.V/6)

18. Operative paragraph 3(e) of the Nairobi Declaration calls for the strengthening of *"the role of UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise."* Decision 19/12 adopted by the nineteenth session of UNEP Governing Council:

- *Urges* the Executive Director to take such additional actions as are deemed necessary to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme to fulfil its designated role in the Global Environment Facility;
- *Reaffirms* the commitment of the Governing Council to strengthen the involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme in the design and implementation of Global Environment Facility Programmes and projects; and
- *Urges* the Executive Director to continue to strengthen the linkages between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility.

19. At its second meeting, held in Nairobi on 2-4 March 1998, UNEP's High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials welcomed the Secretary General's decision to establish a Task force on reforming and strengthening United Nations activities in the environment and human settlements field, and noted that several issues required special attention from the Task Force or the Governing Council, including the need to enhance UNEP's role as an Implementing Agency of the GEF.

20. At its Sixty-second meeting, held in Nairobi on 16 April 1998, UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed the recommendations related to the GEF submitted by its Sub-Committee I. The Committee noted the *"improved performance by UNEP in the Facility, but stressed the need to clarify the role of UNEP."* The Committee was of the view that *"currently, UNEP participation constituted only 3% of the total fund of GEF, meaning that the Programme was not an equal partner with the other participating agencies."* Accordingly, the Committee *"recommended that, in the light of the upcoming review of GEF, the Governing Council should further address the issue of UNEP participation in GEF, with a view to its enhancement and the Secretariat was requested to prepare a document for Governments to address the issue of UNEP participation in GEF, with a view to clarifying its role in the partnership of the three implementing agencies."* ####

21. Decision SS.V/6 on the Global Environment Facility adopted by the Fifth Session of UNEP Governing Council:

a. *Welcomes* the progress made by the Executive Director in strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility, pursuant to decision 19/12 of 7 February 1997 and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme;

b. *Also welcomes* the results of the first meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, held in New Delhi from 1 to 3 April 1998;

c. *Further welcomes* the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Second Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility, and notes the policy recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the Global Environment Facility to maximise its effectiveness and impacts, while respecting the prerogatives of the governing bodies of the Implementing Agencies;

d. *Further welcomes* the revitalised profile of the United Nations Environment Programme as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, as contained in the statement of the Executive Director to the first meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility;

e. *Invites* the Executive Director to take such additional actions as are deemed necessary to strengthen further the revitalised role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility, taking into account the decisions of the March 1998 meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council, and the statement of the first meeting of the Global Environment Facility Assembly, and to present a report on those actions for consideration by the Governing Council at its twentieth session;

f. *Also invites* the Global Environment Facility to support the Executive Director's efforts aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility in accordance with the terms of reference of the Facility.

22. In addition, the fifth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council adopted its decision SS.V/7 on land degradation. By this decision, the Council welcomed the identification by the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, in his statement to the Council, of the issue of land degradation as a priority area on which UNEP should focus. This decision also notes the statement of the first meeting of the GEF Assembly which, inter alia, states that the "*GEF should seek to better define the linkages between land degradation, particularly desertification and deforestation, and its focal areas and to increase GEF support for land degradation activities as they relate to the GEF focal areas.*" The UNEP Council requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, to examine ways to further strengthen the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Global Environment Facility in activities aimed at combating land degradation as they relate to the focal areas of the Global Environment Facility.

B. UNEP's programme priorities in the second phase of the GEF

23. The statement of the Executive Director of UNEP to the First GEF Participants' Assembly highlighted the following priority areas which should guide UNEP's programmes in the future, namely:

(i) Environmental emergencies/catastrophes such as the forest fires in Indonesia and Brazil and the lessons offered by the El Nino phenomenon;

(ii) Strengthening relationships with environmental conventions;

(iii) The development of economic instruments and practices and their use to foster more uniform standards among nations. In this regard particular emphasis will be placed on a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol including initiatives on Clean Development Mechanism;

(iv) Integrated management of water resources;

(v) Environmental problems resulting from urbanisation including water pollution, habitat loss, deforestation, carbon-emitting energy use and transportation policy;

(vi) An increased focus on chemicals including special reference to Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);

(vii) The development of clean technologies in partnership with industry and business and their transfer to developing countries; and

(viii) Mobilisation of the wider scientific and technical community as well as the development of strategic partnerships with the private sector, civil society, NGOs, and regional institutions and Secretariats as a means of strengthening links between science, environmental management and policy.

24. In his statement to the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council, the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the GEF, acknowledged that UNEP has considerable experience and networks in the international waters focal area and cross-cutting issue of land degradation that should be brought to bear in the GEF operations. In addition, and subject to the GEF Council approval, he suggested that UNEP's comparative advantage in the GEF may be best addressed in the following three areas: assessment; scientific information, best practice, and policy analysis; and capacity-building and training for the global environment.

25. Based on the above decisions and considerations, the overall objectives of UNEP in the second phase of the GEF are to:

(a) provide environmental advocacy, analysis and advice in shaping GEF priorities building on UNEP's current responsibility for ensuring the scientific underpinning of GEF activities in co-operation with STAP;

(b) contribute to the GEF ability to make informed strategic and operational decisions through scientific and technical analyses, including targeted research; methodology/tool development and application; learning and dissemination programmes as well as demonstration projects, particularly in new and emerging environmental issues such as biosafety, sustainable use of biological diversity, fair and equitable sharing of benefits, agro-biodiversity, and indigenous knowledge;

(c) relate national actions to the global environmental objectives of the GEF through enabling activities; public awareness and education; and translating international environmental commitments into national legislation and regulations;

(d) advance and promote regional, sub-regional and transboundary co-operation on priorities of global significance and, in particular, in land degradation with special emphasis in Africa. In the area of international waters, UNEP's objective is to provide intellectual leadership and to guide, through the Global International Waters Assessment, the future developments of the GEF portfolio; and

(e) promote a major GEF activity in the area of transfer of technology, including assessment of technological options, barrier removal projects for promoting sustainable technologies.

26. More specifically , UNEP's programmatic focus in the GEF, will be based on the following strategic categories of activities:

Assessment: As the "authoritative advocate for the global environment" UNEP has a wealth of experience and networks in the area of environmental assessment, built during its more than 25 years of experience as evidenced by, the Global Environment Outlook, and the Global Assessment of Soil Degradation, as well as the Global Biodiversity Assessment financed by the GEF.

During the Phase II of the GEF, UNEP will focus on the following: the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA); Wind assessment; a regionally based assessment of Persistent Organic Pollutants and assessment of technological options, as well as other environmental assessments aimed at the further development of the objectives and the operations of the GEF and the global environmental conventions.

Regional Transboundary Collaboration: In many regions of the world major issues affecting the global environment relate to the management of transboundary/shared natural resources - water catchments; contiguous forest ecosystems; grazing lands; oceans and seas -which cannot be effectively managed by each country on its own, but need to be addressed in co-operation between the affected countries. UNEP has always placed considerable emphasis on joint, collaborative, regional and sub-regional approaches to the resolution of environmental issues impacting upon shared/transboundary natural resources. This is best exemplified by UNEP's Regional Seas Programme with its supporting legal instruments and by UNEP's work in desertification. By building and strengthening its regional capacity and delivery mechanisms, UNEP has developed strong partnerships at the regional and sub-regional scale which are utilised to facilitate regional co-operation and partnership. UNEP's experience in regional and transboundary/shared ecosystems is recognised in the *GEF Corporate Business Plan FY99-FY01*. Projects specifically tailored to address shared and/or transboundary ecosystems will be a major focus of UNEP's work in the GEF, particularly in international waters, biodiversity and land degradation.

Targeted Research: With its scientific and technical capability in the field of the environment, UNEP is well placed to play a leading role in advancing the GEF targeted research agenda in accordance with the policy adopted by the Council in March 1997. In operationalizing the GEF research policy, UNEP will focus on those activities that build synergy and complementarity between the GEF related environmental conventions, as well as activities aimed at furthering scientific knowledge and removing scientific uncertainties concerning emerging environmental issues related to the implementation of the environmental conventions.

Innovative Demonstration and Pilot Activities: As the GEF evolves and additional guidance is provided by the Conferences of the Parties to the Global Conventions for which it serves as financial mechanism, the need for GEF innovative, pilot and demonstration approaches will become increasingly apparent. Based on its comparative advantage, UNEP, in accordance with its mandate, will play a leading role in promoting such activities to assist eligible Parties to address emerging environmental issues including *inter alia*: biosafety; sustainable use of biological diversity; fair and equitable sharing of benefits; agro-biodiversity; and, the role of financial instruments in meeting the objectives of the GEF-related environmental conventions and protocols.

Methodological Frameworks and Tools: UNEP has a unique role to play in fostering the development and application of methodologies and tools to address environmental issues at the national, regional and international levels, particularly in bridging the gap between science and operations in the field in environment and policy. In this context, UNEP will further the development of "framework" activities (e.g. methodologies, tools etc.) to address priority issues that are not being adequately dealt with in current GEF operations.

Enabling Activities: As the leading environmental entity in the United Nations System, UNEP has played a critical role in facilitating the development of the global environmental conventions. A critical element in providing practical guidance concerning the implementation of those conventions, particularly in developing countries, is bridging the gap between national objectives and global environmental benefits. UNEP will continue to play an important role in assisting developing countries in honouring their commitment under the GEF-related Conventions. In the second phase of the GEF, UNEP will take the lead in promoting enabling activities to support African countries in meeting their commitments under GEF related conventions including, the Convention to Combat Desertification and its relevant regional annex.

Structured Learning: As enabling activities mature to a sufficient extent, UNEP's focus will shift in emphasis to reviewing the outcome of such activities with a view to: assessing the extent to which they have been successful and cost effective in assisting developing country Parties in implementing the Conventions; analysing the reasons for those that have failed; considering policy and programmatic responses to identified problems; and bringing proposals for remedial and further action to the attention of the GEF.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance: In the area of capacity building and technical assistance, UNEP will concentrate on those areas in which it has developed particular competence such as: environmental law; information and data management systems; building technological capacity at the national and regional levels; strengthening the GEF operational focal points; and mobilising the scientific and technical community to enable them to be more effective advocates for GEF issues in their countries. In the area of environmental law, UNEP will focus in particular, on translating the objectives and provisions of the relevant Global Conventions into national legislation, as well as the provision of policy guidance that encompasses the integration of environmental concerns into national decision-making.

Environmental Awareness/Public Education: Consistent with the recommendation of the "Study of GEF's Overall Performance" UNEP will seek to develop activities in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat and the other Implementing Agencies that develop an outreach and communication strategy designed to target GEF multiple constituencies, including the focal points and relevant government agencies, NGOs and civil society, the media and the private sector. UNEP's focus will be in translating an understanding of global environmental issues, including those addressed by global Conventions, into national policy actions.

Barrier Removal, Technology Innovation and Transfer: In the GEF context factors which mitigate against environmental sustainability are considered as barriers including, constraints to technological innovation and transfer; institutional; administrative; technical; and, or policy related difficulties mitigating against change in practice. Associated with the concept of "barrier removal", projects across the focal areas will be promoted by UNEP/GEF that focus on incentive measures and economic instruments, as well as the utilisation and transfer of emerging technologies in GEF projects.

Short-term response measures: Based on its experience in assisting eligible countries to access GEF resources under short-term measures as evidenced by the Monk Seals and the Forest Fires in Indonesia Medium Sized projects, UNEP will continue to play a leading role in responding to environmental emergencies that may arise from time to time and which require prompt and immediate GEF intervention.

27. In implementing its programme priorities for the second phase of the GEF, UNEP will build strategic partnerships with key scientific and technical institutions and other major stakeholders such as NGOs. In this regard, special attention will be paid by UNEP in promoting Medium Sized Projects aimed at increasing and broadening the involvement of stakeholders, and major groups in addressing global environmental issues. The special relationship between UNEP and STAP will be further strengthened.

CONCLUSION

28. Based on the Nairobi Declaration, the overall goal of UNEP in the GEF is to be the leading environmental Implementing Agency that sets the global environmental agenda, and promotes the environmental dimension in GEF operations based on the best available scientific and technical, information and expertise as well as the state of the art environmental assessments.

29. As highlighted above, the new profile of UNEP in the GEF will be complementary and additional to the focused mandate of the revitalised UNEP as contained in the Nairobi Declaration, and policy statement of the Executive Director endorsed by the fifth Special Session of UNEP Governing Council. In the short and medium term, UNEP's proposals for GEF funding based on the principle of country ownership, will be complementary and additional to the revised UNEP's work programme for 1998-1999 as well as to the work programme for the biennium 2000-2001 that will be adopted by the twentieth meeting of UNEP Governing Council, early in 1999.

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UNITED
NATIONS

EP

Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/HLC/3/INF/4
2 October 1998

ENGLISH ONLY

HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS
Third meeting
Buenos Aires, 10 November 1998
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

OTHER MATTERS

Measures initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme to mainstream Global Environment Facility operations in its regular activities

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, its information note on the measures initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to mainstream Global Environment Facility (GEF) operations in its regular activities, dated 30 September 1998.

* UNEP/HLC/3/1.

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Annex

UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

30 September, 1998

INFORMATION NOTE ON THE MEASURES INTIATED BY UNEP TO MAINSTREAM GEF OPERATIONS IN ITS REGULAR ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

1. With the establishment of the GEF as a pilot phase, UNEP's ClearingHouse Unit was entrusted, in 1991, in addition to its regular activities to act as a focal point for GEF activities. Following the adoption, in 1994, of the *Instrument for the Restructuring of the GEF*, UNEP decided to establish a GEF Coordination Office reporting directly to the Office of the Executive Director. The GEF Coordination Office has been fully operational since July 1996 when all the posts were filled. It comprises eight professionals only, including a Liaison Officer based in Washington DC.

2. Since the establishment of the GEF Coordination Office, a number of measures have been initiated with a view to mainstreaming the GEF operations and procedures in UNEP and in particular in the following five areas: coordination with the substantive programs and regional offices, building synergy between STAP and the scientific and technical activities of UNEP in the GEF, integrating the principles guiding the GEF project cycle in UNEP's administrative procedures, training and outreach.

I. ENHANCING THE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE SUBSTANTIVE UNITS AND UNEP/GEF COORDINATION OFFICE.

1. With a view to mainstreaming the GEF in UNEP's core activities and ensuring better coordination of the activities of all UNEP/GEF partners, the Executive Director of UNEP convened on

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5 October 1996 a retreat on the GEF with the participation of more than 50 senior UNEP managers including the Directors of regional and outposted offices.

2. As a result of the UNEP/GEF retreat of senior managers, the Executive Director issued on 5 December 1996 an Executive Directive addressed to all UNEP staff containing the *Modus Operandi of UNEP's GEF Work Program.* The Executive Directive provides a clear delineation of the role and responsibilities between the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office, the substantive units and the regional and outposted offices. It contains the terms of reference of the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office, the role of the three Senior Program Officers (Climate change, Biodiversity and International waters), the role and function of substantives entities, including the regional and outposted offices. The Executive Directive is contained in the Annex.

5. Pursuant to the Modus Operandi, the Atmosphere, Biodiversity, Land and Water units as well as all regional offices have designated part-time GEF focal points, paid by UNEP's Environment Fund, with the following terms of reference:

(i) Comment, or coordinate the unit/office's comments, on all projects presented by the Implementing Agencies related to their programs/regions;
(ii) In consultation with stakeholders, identify and/or develop project ideas of relevance to UNEP's mandate as an Implementing Agency of GEF, particularly in collaboration with their partner organizations;
(iii) Liaise with UNEP/GEF Coordination Office on all matters pertaining to the activities of the GEF in their programs/regions; and
(iv) For regional focal points, liaise with the relevant authorities and in particular, the GEF Operational and Political Focal Points of their regions on issues related to UNEP/GEF activities.

6. To facilitate the flow of information and to ensure adequate coordination of activities, meetings between the staff of the GEF Coordination Office and the UNEP/GEF focal points located in the substantive units are convened on a weekly basis. The minutes of the meetings are distributed electronically to all relevant UNEP staff.

7. The Modus Operandi also establishes the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee composed of the Heads of the substantive units with the following mandate:

(i) Ensure the adequate preparation of UNEP's pipeline;
(ii) Review UNEP's official GEF submission of projects and concepts;
(iii) Oversee and monitor the implementation of UNEP/GEF work program.

8. Since its establishment in early 1997, the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee held nine meetings (five meetings a year). Following the reorganization of UNEP on a functional basis, the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee will comprise in the future the Heads of the newly established Divisions and will be chaired by the Deputy Executive Director.

9. In addition, UNEP/GEF task forces have been established for the following issues: Project Implementation Review (PIR); Review of UNEP's pipeline, Technical Support Group on land degradation as it relates to the GEF focal areas.

10. To ensure a better integration of GEF operations in UNEP's activities, the Executive Coordinator of the UNEP GEF Coordination Office is a member of the UNEP Management Board chaired by the Executive Director. Such integration is also sought through the physical location in the substantive unit of the task managers of UNEP/GEF projects.

II. BUILDING SYNERGY BETWEEN STAP AND UNEP'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE GEF

11. Providing scientific and technical backstopping to STAP remains one of the priorities for UNEP in its capacity as the organization that provides the Secretariat to STAP. In addition, UNEP actively participates in all thematic workshops organized by STAP and backstopped the four meetings on the reconstitution of STAP. Further, UNEP in consultation with STAP, provided the necessary support for ensuring a high quality Roster of Experts for reviewing potential GEF projects.

12. UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the GEF has worked closely with STAP to put science on the agenda of GEF operations. In this context, UNEP has worked with STAP for the preparation of the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), adopted by the GEF Council in October 1997. UNEP has also taken an active role in mainstreaming the recommendations of STAP into GEF which have resulted in a portfolio of activities addressing land degradation as it relates to the GEF focal areas. Recommendations from STAP have also resulted in GEF funded PDF A's on biodiversity

indicators and on a socio-economic assessment of the Indonesian Fires which will further help in mainstreaming science into GEF operations through UNEP project activities in the GEF work programme.

13. All workshops organized for UNEP staff, Convention Secretariats, and Regional Offices have included a presentation on STAP. In addition, information material on STAP and its role in GEF operations has been circulated widely with the aim of mainstreaming the recommendations of STAP into UNEP's activities.

14. The new Division in UNEP on Environmental Information and Assessment has a strong focus on research and will help in mainstreaming STAP into UNEP activities and will provide the institutional framework to strengthen the UNEP/STAP collaboration.

III. INTEGRATING THE GEF PROJECT CYCLE IN UNEP ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

15. UNEP's Project Approval Group has adopted a number of measures aimed at shortening the project cycle of UNEP/GEF activities while continuing to ensure the conformity of UNEP/GEF submissions to UNEP's mission.

16. On 14 November 1997, the Project Approval Group adopted modified procedures for the processing and approval of GEF projects. The Project Approval Group agreed on :

(i) Expedited procedures for Climate Change and Biodiversity enabling activities, including the Clearing-House Mechanism add on activities;
(ii) Simplified procedures regarding the processing of UNEP/GEF Medium Sized projects;
(iii) Specific procedures for the internalization of UNEP/GEF PDF As and Bs;
(iv) Submission of UNEP/GEF projects in GEF format and not in UNEP format for internal approval.

17. In order to avoid duplication and overlap, a delineation of responsibilities between the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee and the UNEP Project Approval Group has been also agreed upon.

18. Special efforts have been undertaken by the United Nations Offices in Nairobi (UNON) to accommodate the reporting requirements based on the GEF fiscal year that differs from the UNEP calendar year reporting system.

IV. TRAINING

19. In July 1996, an operational manual for UNEP staff on GEF guidelines, procedures and policy was prepared by UNEP/GEF Coordination Office and distributed to all UNEP staff as well as to the Committee of Permanent Representatives. A revised version of the UNEP/GEF operational manual for UNEP staff will be prepared by the end of this year to incorporate the latest developments that have taken place in relation to GEF operations, including the results of the first GEF Assembly and the expected decisions from the 12th session of the GEF Council.

20. Immediately after their appointment, a training session of two weeks duration of the UNEP/GEF Regional Focal points offices was organized in June 1996 in New York and Washington DC at the headquarters of UNDP, the World Bank and the GEF Secretariat.

21. A seminar on Incremental Costs was organized in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat for UNEP staff at the headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi on 17-19 April 1996.

22. A seminar on GEF Logical Framework for UNEP staff was convened in collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the GEF Secretariat, Nairobi 2-3 September 1996.

23. A workshop on GEF Targeted Research and Medium-Sized Projects for UNEP staff was convened in Nairobi on 6 June 1997.

24. The following workshops on the GEF and the role of UNEP were also organized at:

(i) Headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi, on 6 May 1996;
(ii) UNEP Office in Geneva, 28 May 1996;
(iii) UNEP Industry and Environment Office, Paris 6 June 1996;
(iv) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, 22 July 1996;
(v) Regional Office for West Asia, Bahrain, 1-2 September 1996;
(vi) Regional Office for North America, New-York, 11 October 1996;

(vii) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 9 December 1996;
(viii) Permanent Commission of South Pacific, Quito, 11-12 June 1997.

V. OUTREACH

25. A number of outreach activities have been undertaken on UNEP/GEF activities with government representatives, the secretariats of GEF-related environmental conventions as well as with non-governmental organizations.

A. OUTREACH WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

25. Immediately after the adoption by UNEP Management Board meeting, held in June 1996, of the UNEP/GEF work program for 1996-1997, a number of meeting were convened with governments representatives on UNEP's priorities in the GEF and in particular:

(i) Briefing with the regional representatives of UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives; Nairobi 2 July 1996;
(ii) Briefing with the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives, Nairobi 27 September 1996;
(iii) Briefing with the Permanent Missions in New-York, 11 October 1996;
(iv) Briefing with the Permanent Missions in Geneva, 9 October 1997.

25. Shortened version of the GEF Project Development Workshop with special emphasis on the role of UNEP and STAP were organized with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi on 23 October 1996 and with the Group of 77 on 23 September 1997.

26. A press conference with UNEP's accredited media on UNEP/GEF activities in Africa was also held in Nairobi on 12 March 1998.

B. OUTREACH WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ENVIRONMENT GEF RELATED CONVENTIONS

29. Workshops on GEF and the role of UNEP were also convened for the staff of the UNEP administered Conventions and in particular with :

(i) Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES), Geneva 28 May 1996;
(ii) Representatives of the UNEP's Regional Seas Programs, Geneva, May 1996;

(iii) Participants attending the Seventh meeting on the Coordination of the Environmental Conventions, Geneva 14-15 July 1997;
(iv) Convention on Migratory Species, Bonn, 9-10 June 1998.

C. OUREACH WITH THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

29. The following workshops on UNEP/GEF activities have been convened with the representatives of the non governmental organizations:
(i) Meetings with the Regional Networks of Non-Governmental Organizations accredited to the GEF, Geneva May 1996;
(ii) Meeting with the Caribbean Non Governmental Organizations on UNEP/GEF Medium Sized program; Barbados, 25 July 1997;
(iii) Meeting with the Non Governmental Organizations accredited to the Convention on Migratory Species, Bonn 11 June 1998.

VI. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

29. The following communication materials have been prepared, most of them in the six official languages of the United Nations and distributed at major GEF related meetings, including the UNEP Governing Council :

(i) Brochure on the GEF and the role of UNEP in it, April 1996;
(ii) UNEP/GEF information kits, December 1996;
(iii) Articles on UNEP's activities in the GEF were regularly published in UNEP's magazine *Our Planet*. In addition, special issues of the GEF were produced for the GEF Assembly in March 1998 and for COP-4 of the UNFCCC in Buenos Aires;
(iv) Biodiversity enabling activities brochure, June1997;
(v) Climate Change enabling activities brochure, July 1997;
(vi) Brochure on the Medium Sized Program, March 1998;
(vii) Leaflet on STAP, March 1998;
(viii) Brochure on UNEP/GEF Land Degradation activities, March 1998;
(ix) Poster on UNEP/GEF activities, March 1998.

29. The UNEP/GEF homepage was constructed in December 1996 and is regularly updated.

30. Exhibits on UNEP/GEF activities have been mounted at the 19th session of the UNEP Governing Council, January 1997 and its Fifth Special Session held on 20-22 may 1998 in Nairobi as well as at major GEF related meetings.

CONCLUSION

34. Based on the measures initiated by UNEP, since the establishment of its GEF Coordination Office, to familiarize its staff with GEF operations and procedures, the Study of GEF's Overall Performance recognizes in its paragraphs 306 and 307 that "*UNEP has taken several initiatives to acquaint senior management, substantive units, and regional offices with GEF's policies, procedures, and operational guidelines, including a retreat for senior management, workshops at headquarters and in all regional offices, and distribution of manual on UNEP GEF operations. UNEP's familiarization efforts and consultations with the GEF Secretariat have led to an improvement in UNEP's programming with regard to the additionality requirements.*"

35. However, the study team was of the view that UNEP has not provided incentives for work on GEF projects. It is the view of the UNEP management that this issue of staff incentives should be addressed in relation to UNEP/GEF annual administrative budget, which should be increased to respond to the recommendation of the GEF's Overall Performance Study.